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REPORTS

OF THE

SELECTMEN, TREASURER,

AND

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

OF THE

TOWN OF HUDSON,

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING MARCH 1ST, 1881.

NASHUA:

M. V. B. GREENE, PRINTER, STATIONER AND BINDER.

1881.

REPORT OF THE SELECTMEN.

Taxes assessed in April, 1880.

Total amount assessed and committed to Collector, including State, County, Town, School and Non- Resident highway tax,	\$5,056 45	
Dog tax,	75 00	
	<hr/>	\$5,131 45
Total amount collected,	\$4,447 16	
Amount uncollected,	684 29	
	<hr/>	\$5,131 45

RECEIPTS BY THE SELECTMEN.

Received of City of Nashua for lighting T. F. Bridge, from March 1, 1879, to March 1, 1880,	\$29 16	
of County of Hillsborough, for support of A. John- son,	3 38	
State Treasurer, bounty paid on hawks,	59 20	
State Treasurer, Railroad tax,	252 36	
State Treasurer, Savings Bank tax,	930 81	
State Treasurer, Literary Fund,	64 38	
First Nat'l Bank, Nashua interest on deposits,	18 50	
	<hr/>	\$1,357 79

TOWN EXPENSES.

Highways and Bridges.

Paid Samuel Walker for oil for T.	
F. Bridge,	\$28 20
S. M. Blanchard for labor on	
highway in 1877,	2 10
J. B. Merrill for cash paid for re-	
pairing lanterns for T. F. br.	2 50
Robert Graves for bridge plank,	
powder, fuse and spikes,	8 19
Tyler Thomas for stone for	
bridge near T. W. Moore's,	15 00
Rob't Graves for labor on high-	
way, 1879,	5 20
Oswold P. Baker for labor on	
highway in highway dist.	
No. 18,	3 40
Timothy Donohue for labor on	
highway in district No. 9,	10 80
J. H. Thurber for insurance on	
T. F. bridge, one year to	
Aug. 1, 1881,	45 00
Frederick Steele for cash paid	
plank for bridges near G. W.	
Marshall's and Woods' mill,	9 58
L. M. Tolles for cash paid for	
labor on bridge near T. W.	
Moore's and for poles and	
rod for railing for same,	7 73
W. F. Winn, cash paid for plank	
for bridge in dist. No. 3,	13 57
J. B. Merrill for snowing T. F.	
bridge 1 year to Mar. 1, '81,	10 00

Paid J. B. Merrill for lighting T. F. bridge, one year to Mar. 1, 1881,	\$35 00	
C. L. Spalding for non resident highway tax receipts for 1879,	7 02	
C. L. Spalding, cash paid Sarah P. Gowing for labor on highway, 1879,	83	
Edward E. Weston for labor on highway,	2 60	
		<hr/> \$206 72

INCIDENTAL EXPENSES.

Paid M. V. B. Greene, printing town reports for 1880-1,	\$24 00
Wm. F. Winn, for bounty on 15 hawks,	3 00
A. F. Stevens, for counsel for town for 1877-79,	21 00
C. W. Spalding, for cash paid for printing notices and repair- ing lock on town house door,	1 75
Geo. W. Haselton, for wood for town house,	2 25
Kimball Webster, for running line between land of Daniel Learned and gravel bank,	75
Thomas Moore, for over-assess- ment,	3 20
Hiram Cummings, over-assess- ment,	2 10
Dr. E. F. McQuesten, for exami- nation of Susie C. Greeley,	5 00

Paid A. W. Sawyer, for counsel for town from 1877 to 1880, inclusive,	\$23 00
Frank A. Walch, for services during night at fire at J. Carnes' barn,	1 25
David Clement, for public watering trough one year to Mar. 1, 1881,	3 00
J. K. Wheeler, for public watering trough one year to Mar. 1, 1881,	3 00
J. E. Armstrong, public watering trough one year to Mar. 1, 1881,	3 00
H. R. Wheeler, printing check-lists,	5 00
L. M. Tolles, cash paid for collector's book and highway surveyors' books and stationery,	5 91
L. M. Tolles, cash fare of Wm. H. Smith to Wilton,	55
C. W. Spalding for public watering trough one year to Mar. 1, 1881,	3 00
C. L. Spalding for abatement of taxes for 1879,	24 41
L. M. Tolles for cash paid for bounty on 326 hawks,	65 20
Wm. S. Weston for bounty paid on 67 hawks,	13 40
C. L. Spalding for cash paid for printing tax bills,	2 25
C. L. Spalding for non-resident	

highway tax receipts for		
1880,	\$42 39	
	<hr/>	\$258 41

TOWN OFFICERS, 1879.

Paid Dwight E. Martin, services as		
Police Officer,	\$5 00	
C. L. Spalding, balance due for	.	
collecting taxes for 1879,	14 86	
	<hr/>	\$19 86

TOWN OFFICERS, 1880.

Paid Dwight Martin, for services as	
Police Officer,	\$5 75
Ezra E. Martin, for services as	
Police Officer,	9 50
S. D. Greeley, for services as	
Supervisor two years to	
November, 1880,	15 00
Nathaniel Wentworth, services	
as Supervisor two years to	
November 1880,	15 00
A. G. Hutchins, for services as	
Supervisor two years to Nov.	
1880,	15 00
J. B. Merrill, for services as	
Town Clerk,	20 00
J. B. Merrill, for services as	
Town Treasurer,	25 00
L. M. Tolles, for services as	
Selectman and Overseer of	
the Poor,	95 00

Paid C. W. Spalding, for services as Selectman and Overseer of the Poor,	\$70 00	
C. L. Spalding, for part payment for collecting taxes for 1880,	80 00	
Wm. S. Weston, for services as Selectman and Overseer of the Poor,	45 00	
Daniel Gage, services as Super- intending School Committee,	50 00	
	<hr/>	\$445 25

NOTES AND INTEREST PAID.

Paid Amory Burnham, for balance due on note and interest and endorsement on note,	\$912 20	
Alden E. Cummings, for endorse- ment on note,	300 00	
	<hr/>	\$1,212 20

SCHOOL MONEY.

Paid George T. Gowing, Dist. No. 1,	\$141 00	
William Kelley, " " 2,	128 00	
George H. Davis, " " 3,	117 00	
Frederick Steele, " " 4,	159 99	
Hiram B. Taylor, " " 5,	202 28	
Louisa M. Marsh, " " 6,	159 99	
Wm. H. Allen, " " 7,	129 28	
Wm. S. Weston, " " 8,	143 57	
Jackson E. Greeley, " " 9,	129 28	
Justin E. Hill, " " 10,	129 28	
	<hr/>	\$1,439 67

STATE AND COUNTY TAX.

Paid State tax,	\$1,496 00	
County tax,	1,426 56	
	<hr/>	\$2,922 56

EXPENSES OF THE POOR.

Paid Chas. S. Cutter for nursing Jas. Cutter,	\$7 50
James Carnes for meal and flour for James Cutter,	5 20
Dr. Chas. Dutton for medical attendance upon Jas. Cutter,	12 00
Tyler Thomas for support of Jonathan Sprake,	21 00
A. J. Rockwood for coffin and robe for Jonathan Sprake,	15 50
D. O. Smith for medical attendance upon Jona. Sprake in 1879-80,	17 00
A. J. Smith for support of Dan'l P. Corliss,	261 24
Levi E. Cross for support of Wm. Miller,	104 00
L. M. Tolles for cash paid for clothing for Wm. Miller,	5 17
James Carnes, groceries for Jas. Corliss,	4 51
James Carnes for groceries for Wm. H. Smith,	10 80
L. M. Tolles, cash paid for clothing for Luke Burns,	5 12
Lima Burns for support of Luke Burns,	78 00

Paid Jas. Cutter for support of himself,	\$78 00	
	<hr/>	\$625 04

TAXES.

Taxes refunded which were paid in 1879 on deposits in Savings Banks out of the State,	\$292 85	
	<hr/>	\$292 85

RECAPITULATION.

Paid on account of highways and bridges,	\$206 72	
Incidental expenses,	258 41	
Salaries of town officers,	445 25	
Notes and interest,	1,212 20	
Town officers, 1879,	19 86	
State and County tax,	2,922 56	
School money,	1,439 67	
Savings Bank tax refunded,	292 85	
Expenses of the poor,	625 04	
	<hr/>	\$7,422 56
Outstanding orders drawn on the treasury for damages to domes- tic animals by dogs payable on or after the first of April next,		
John P. Putnam,	\$6 00	

LIABILITIES.

DEMAND NOTES.

Martha W. Marsh,	\$255 44
Alden E. Cummings,	1,316 07

Amory Burnham,	\$2,001 95	
Charles H. Newcomb,	1,215 50	
Total amount of notes,	<hr/>	\$4,788 96
Dog tax collected, 1880,	47 00	
Due school dist. No. 1,	18 99	
“ “ “ “ 2,	31 99	
“ “ “ “ 3,	12 28	
	<hr/>	\$110 26
		<hr/>
		\$4,899 22

ASSETS.

NOTES AND BILLS DUE.

J. E. and C. E. Senter, note,	\$1,009 97	
Joseph Fuller, note,	173 16	
City of Nashua, lighting T. F. bridge,	32 85	
State Treasurer, cash paid for bounty on hawks,	38 60	
From C. L. Spalding, Collector, inter- est not included,	684 29	
Cash in treasury,	928 52	
Total assets,	<hr/>	\$2,867 39
Actual debt of the town,		2,031 83
Decrease of debt for the year ending March 1st, 1881,		126 30

L. M. TOLLES,
C. W. SPALDING,
W. S. WESTON,
SELECTMEN OF HUDSON.

TREASURER'S REPORT,

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING FEB. 28TH, 1881.

To Cash in Treasury March 1, 1880,	\$1,712 75
Received of Charles L. Spalding, collector for 1879,	\$855 73
interest, " "	17 65
Chas. L. Spalding, collector for 1880,	4,447 16
L. M. Tolles, from Hillsborough County,	3 38
City of Nashua for lighting T. F. bridge,	29 16
State Treasurer, bounty on hawks,	59 20
Railroad tax,	252 36
Savings Bank tax,	930 81
Literary Fund,	64 38
Interest on deposits,	18 50
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Total amount of receipts,	\$8,391 08
Paid 132 Treasurer's orders for the year ending Feb. 28th. 1881,	
amounting to	\$7,462 56
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Cash in Treasury March 1, 1881,	\$928 52

JAMES B. MERRILL,
TREASURER OF THE TOWN OF HUDSON.

We have this day examined the foregoing accounts of James B. Merrill, Town Treasurer, and find them correctly cast and each payment properly vouched.

L. M. TOLLES,
C. W. SPALDING,
W. S. WESTON,
SELECTMEN OF HUDSON.

March 1st, 1881.

REPORT

OF THE

SUPERINTENDING SCHOOL COMMITTEE

GENERAL STATUTES, CHAP. 81, SEC. 19.

The School Committee shall present to the town, at its annual meeting, a report stating the number of weeks the public schools have been kept in each district, in summer and winter, and what portion by male, and what by female teachers ; the whole number of scholars that have attended each school, and the number attending to each study ; the number of children between four and fourteen that have not attended school, and the number of persons in each district between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one years who cannot read and write, with such suggestions relative to the schools as they may think useful.

A SCHOOL REPORT ; WHAT SHOULD IT BE ?

The foregoing statute definitely answers the question. We shall therefore depart from the usual custom so far as to omit the customary criticisms of individual teachers and schools ; we are aware of the general interest felt in them, both by the subjects of such criticisms and the public generally, and are not unwilling to gratify any legitimate desire in this direction, if by so doing we should aid the cause of common school education. But we do not believe that the law, the best interests of the school, an enlightened public sentiment require it. We prefer to speak of the schools in general terms, except in extreme cases, rather

than give a minute description of each. It avoids much useless repetition and formality. To report the success of seventeen different teachers demands a longer list of synonyms than we have at our command.

A report, to be readable, must have a pleasing variety, and this is often secured at a sacrifice of justice, for if No. 1 is commended for excellence in one branch of study the temptation is to pass over No. 2 in silence, which is equally as good. If we bestow praise upon one, we by implication censure another when no such censure is intended. We do not believe in dragging the names of individual teachers before the public and exposing their faults and failures to its gaze. If a teacher is unsuccessful we would throw no obstacle in the way of her future employment and success. The success of a teacher is often affected to some extent by circumstances beyond her control—by some that are peculiar to the district or school; but under others she might be more successful. The character and reputation of a young teacher is to them invaluable, and should be touched with great caution. Besides we cannot suppose our criticisms to be infallible; we might be wrong and do great injustice. If any teacher wishes to know our opinion of their relative merits and success we would refer them to our general remarks, and if they find anything therein applicable to themselves, they may be assured that it was the precise application of them we intended to make. If the faithful teacher—and many such we have had—seeks a higher reward she will find it in the love and respect of pupils and parents and an inward sense of having done her duty.

One of the duties of a committee is to point out the defects of a teacher or a school during its progress, when it can be of service. This we have done when needed, and have, in several instances, witnessed an improvement. Teachers have, generally, received suggestions with a spirit of kindness.

LIST OF SCHOOL OFFICERS AND TEACHERS.

District No. 1. Prudential Committee, Geo. T. Gowing. Teacher, first term, Sarah B. Merrill; second term, Anna I. Rodcliffe.

District No. 2. Prudential Committee, William Kelley. Teacher, first and second terms, Eliza A. Thomas.

District No. 3. Prudential Committee, George H. Davis. Teacher, first and second terms, Alice M. Allen.

District No. 4. Prudential Committee, Frederick Steele. Teacher, first and second terms, Ella M. Dodge.

District No. 5. Prudential Committee, Hiram B. Taylor. Teacher, first term, M. Etta Elliott; second and third term, Hattie L. Putnam.

District No. 6. Prudential Committee, Louisa M. Marsh. Teacher, first and second terms, Helen M. White; third term, James T. Jones.

District No. 7. Prudential Committee, Wm. H. Allen. Teacher, first term, Addie P. Boyd; second term, Nellie O. Moore.

District No. 8. Prudential Committee, William Weston. Teacher, first term, Flora L. Austin; second term, Sue G. Alvord.

District No. 9. Prudential Committee, Jackson E. Greeley. Teacher, first term, Maggie A. O'Neil; second term, Emma D. Boyd.

District No. 10. Prudential Committee, Justin E. Hills. Teacher, first term, Katie C. Eastman; second term, Nellie M. Chase.

STATISTICS.

No. of District	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No. of Term	1st 2nd	1st 2nd	1st 2nd	1st 2nd	1st 2nd	1st 2nd	1st 2nd	1st 2nd	1st 2nd	1st 2nd
Length of School in Weeks	11 14	8 12	11 10	8 11	10 8	10 6	9 9	8 15	14 10	12 12
Whole No. of Pupils	6 18	21 24	11 14	21 25	18 28	24 24	10 13	7 10	15 13	4 9
Average No. of Pupils	5 11	17 21	10 12	19 22	16 26	19 22	12 7	11 5	14 12	3 7
No. of Pupils between 5 and 15	6 13	22 25	12 14	19 20	17 21	8 10	6 8	4 6	16 15	5 7
No. of Pupils not absent	1 1	1 1	3 4	2 3	7 1	1 8	1 1	2 2	6 4	2 2
No. between 5 and 15 not attending any school	1 1	1 1	1 1	1 1	7 12	3 2	4 1	2 2	2 2	2 2
Wages teacher per M includ'g board	\$18 \$26	\$24 \$26	\$21 \$24	\$26 \$26	\$26 \$24	\$23 \$24	\$25 \$20	\$22 \$20	\$23 \$20	\$24 \$24
No. of visits by Superintendent	2 3	2 2	2 3	2 2	2 2	3 3	2 2	1 2	2 3	2 2
" " " Prudential Com.	2 3	2 2	3 3	2 2	2 2	3 3	2 2	2 2	3 3	2 2
" " " Parents & Citizens	20 *	7 7	7 7	24 21	30 9	32 17	20 25	12 9	19 27	19 15
No. of Pupils studying Reading				21 25	18 30	19 14	22 24	17 16	17 17	5 9
" " " Spelling				21 24	18 16	19 14	22 24	16 16	17 17	5 9
" " " Penmanship				13 17	12 14	19 14	20 19	16 16	9 9	5 9
" " " Arithmetic				14 19	17 17	19 14	19 18	16 16	13 13	4 9
" " " Geography				13 13	5 10	8 13	14 12	12 12	5 5	3 4
" " " Grammar				3 4	4 4	6 7	9 9	4 4	4 4	1 4
" " " History				4 4	2 2	4 3	3 3	2 2	2 2	5 7
" " " Composition				1 1	2 2	2 2	2 2	2 2	2 2	1 1
No. studying Higher Branches				1 1	2 2	2 2	2 2	2 2	2 2	1 1

*A part of the Registers were minus the blanks for reporting the number studying the common branches, †Fractions omitted.

ROLL OF HONOR

Including the names of all pupils who have been present every half day of a term without being tardy.

District No. 1. Cora E. Annis.

District No. 2. Forrest Pollard, Emma B. Colburn.

District No. 3. Sherman W. Smith, Osmon W. Smith, Cora E. Smith, Helen M. Morrison.

District No. 4. Fred Blodgett, Ellen Fuller, Edna Hutchins, Frankie Jay.

District No. 5. Wilmot E. Morrill, Clara A. Buttrick, Sarah M. Buttrick, Bertha M. Hamlett, Mary E. Hamlett, Lottie B. Kennedy, Louella Malhiot, Matilda Malbiot, Nellie E. Smith, Arthur Smith.

District No. 6. Lewa Hanscom, Julia Webster, Delia Hanscom, Harry Baldwin, Calvin W. Hills, Charles Hills, Sumner Hills, Fred Thompson, Leafy H. Gay.

District No. 8. Emily Wilcox, Maggie Wilcox, Bertie Cross.

District No. 9. Herbie M. Berry, Sadie E. Berry, David O. Marshall, Flora E. Putnam, Florence E. Putnam, Frankie Robinson.

District No. 10. Maude Andrews, Charlie Chase.

THE RETROSPECT.

In surveying the condition of our schools the past year, we would first recognize the hand of a kind Providence in preserving the lives of the committee and teachers, and in vouchsafing a good measure of health to the pupils.

The attendance of two terms of school has been interrupted by a prevailing disease, retarding the progress which would otherwise have been made. In two districts a spirit of discord and insubordination has been manifested. With these exceptions, general harmony has prevailed. Pupils have shown themselves orderly, and disposed to

make a good use of their privileges. We are proud to number in our corps of teachers the past year several of large experience and skillful in imparting instruction. It is to be regretted that more effort is not made to secure and retain the services of such teachers from term to term. We would soon see the good results in an elevated condition of our schools.

Of the standing of our schools the past year relative to those immediately preceding, a single isolated term of service will not enable us to decide; but in our judgment it is fully up to the average of those years. That standard is not high; nor can it be under existing circumstances.

It may not be out of place here to remark, that in comparing the qualifications of our teachers with those of some twelve years ago, when we served in the capacity of school committee, improvement is manifest in some particulars. Our teachers, if not graduates of a normal school, bring to their work more of the normal spirit, pursuing a more rational system of instruction in the various branches taught. We trust that this improvement is but the dawn of a brighter day in our common school history; and that the time is near at hand when no one can find employment in our schools who has not had some special preparation for the work.

It is not presumed that our schools have been uniformly successful. The teachers brought to their work various qualifications, differing in natural temperament, experience in teaching literary qualifications, methods of and skill in imparting instruction; consequently have wrought different results. A majority of our schools have been good, and quite a number excellent. While there have been no total failures, several terms have been quite unsatisfactory.

In the examination of teachers there are those who appear well and give fair promise of success, but in the hour of trial fail. Some of whom we cherished high hopes failed to meet our expectations; and others of whom we entertained fears have been highly successful.

It is not possible for a committee on the mere examination of candidates, to decide who possess an aptness for the work, or who will fail.

Among the causes which have operated against the success of some of our schools the past year are inexperience, want of energy, want of ability to impress truth upon the minds of pupils and to interest and stimulate them, lack of ability to govern, unfriendly parental influence.

From District No. 4, three cases of discipline were referred to your committee for settlement during the winter term. Our decisions were severely criticised; but mature deliberation confirms us in the belief that under the circumstances they were settled in the best interests of the school, both present and future. Open resistance to reasonable demands of a teacher in the school-room is an evil of no trifling character. It is subversive of all school government; it cannot, with safety, be disregarded; and if not severely checked, it threatens to become a source of danger to the highest interests of the school. Granting that the teacher acted injudiciously—and teachers are human; they have their faults. But consider the trial of temper, the vexation of spirit, the irritation of feeling in connection with home discipline, and then multiply it ten-fold, and does not the teacher deserve sympathy and patient forbearance rather than censure? Is it not better for parents to say nothing prejudicial to the teacher before their children, but try to ascertain the real facts in the case, and speak fairly and candidly to the teacher on the subject, and if they refuse a respectful attention, then it would be time to call the attention of the committee to the case. It is well, too, for teachers to gain access to the minds of the parents, to seek information, and to impart it upon the subjects of their daily labors. A few words will often remove misapprehensions, and secure the aid of parental authority in the right direction.

ATTENDANCE.

The attention of parents has so often been called to the evil effects of irregular attendance that it is almost a useless waste of words to mention it in this report. If time is money, a reference to the school registers will show the loss of a large per cent. of the school money expended, caused by tardiness and irregular attendance. Do parents and guardians realize this loss to the children intrusted to their care?

Education is a continuous work; it cannot be acquired by snatches. We are told that the human frame to reach its utmost strength must be subjected to continuous exercise. So it is with the mind. The child who goes steadily to school will accomplish much more in a given time than one who is allowed to be absent even one day in the week.

As an inducement to scholars to be punctual and constant in attendance at school, we publish in this report the names of all who were not absent nor tardy during a single term. We would in justice say, that many others have made as great an effort to be punctual every day as those whose names appear in this report. Some have been absent on account of sickness, and quite a number but half a day or a day.

We regret that there are those who think it to be their duty to withhold their children from school on account of a dislike to the teacher, or of some mismanagement of the school. It is decidedly an error to suppose the management of the school must be unexceptional or else all obligation to send children to school ceases.

We believe the source of it lay in putting too much confidence in children's reports. Not that they would deliberately falsify, but they, being the interested party, are not in a condition to judge correctly. We would here renew our suggestion that parents visit the school and see for themselves.

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION.

The methods of teaching are improving. The method of nature is more closely followed, which teaches children to learn more by experiment than by books. It addresses itself to the intellect; not merely to the memory. The blackboard, the slate, the map, play a more important part in the work of instruction. A more practical application of what is learned is made. Are our schools reaping the benefit of these improvements? To a certain extent we are. Many of our teachers have availed themselves of these improvements, have not only HEARD lessons but TAUGHT them. They have sought to make principles intelligible to their pupils. But still too often do we find teachers pursuing the old fashioned methods of teaching, or rather of HEARING lessons, that have long been obsolete in our most intelligent places. Too often do we find them compelling their pupils to commit to memory page after page of rules and definitions while they seem to be laboring under the delusion that they are teaching; let it be understood that to hear recitations is but a small part of a teacher's duty. Yet too many teachers and parents are satisfied if pupils recite well. WE are not. To recite well, only requires a strong memory. It is a mechanical process: The learned pig can do this. The text-book is for the pupil and not for the teacher, and the object of a recitation is to see if the pupil has done his part, learned what he can from the book. The teacher's duty is to see if the lessons are understood, to explain, illustrate, to make dry rules and definitions LIVE. We have been present when not a single idea was given to the class by the teacher. No attempt was made to illustrate the lesson, or a single anecdote related. Pupils often recite lessons with great fluency when they have not the least idea of the words or of the reasons of the rules given. A teacher has no right in the school-room who cannot throw aside the text-book and make text-

books of themselves—throwing new light from their own minds upon each subject taught. How many of our young teachers have made any special preparation for their work either by availing themselves of the privileges of our normal school or by reading and studying some of the many works that are published upon the methods of teaching the different branches. We do not thus speak because our teachers are in our opinion less fitted for their work than others, but because it is the great defect in teaching.

GOVERNMENT.

The government in many of our schools the past year has been wise and salutary. In others the pupils have been the governors and the teacher the governed. A school without government is like a ship without a commander—in danger from waves without and mutiny within. Without a proper degree of order nothing can be done to advantage. We do not mean the silence of death, but such as is consistent with the diligent discharge of the duties appropriate to the school-room. School government should be mild, firm, equable. Outbursts of passion, sour and sullen words should be avoided. Equally unfortunate is the habit of fretting and scolding, it places an ice barrier between pupil and teacher, and renders useful study out of the question. A school should be a place of culture and refinement.

READING.

In no study do teachers meet with so little success in teaching as in the art of reading. To this general statement there have been several marked exceptions. In Districts No. 2, 10, and 5, the reading was exceptionally fine. In others very marked improvement was made. But too often classes are allowed to read "around," in whatever tone they please, without any correction except as to

wrong pronunciation and neglect of pauses; while position, manner of holding the book, tones, inflection, emphasis, are almost wholly disregarded. Scholars should be daily drilled in the vowel and consonant elements of our language. They should acquire a perfect control of the vocal organs while young. The vocal organs are as much an instrument for producing the sounds of speech as is the piano for producing the notes of music. Each elementary sound has its exact position of the vocal organs for its production. Frequent and severe drilling in these sounds, and their various combinations as seen in words, is very essential to correct reading.

There is a disposition in some of the schools to read in books beyond the capacity of the reader. We hold that in no case should pupils be allowed to read what they do not understand. Yet this is violated every day in our schools. Some of our teachers have been doing something to correct this evil. Each reading lesson was made a subject of drill in reference to the meaning of words and phrases, and of the subject matter of the lesson. To teach reading successfully requires careful preparation on the part of the teacher.

SPELLING.

One of the requirements of your committee was, that a part of the spelling should be by writing. This makes the exercise a practical one,—practical in the direction in which it is to be brought into use. To make this method more available we have exchanged Town's Speller for Watson's Complete Speller without expense. Rightly used, good penmanship, correct spelling and pronunciation can be taught in union.

WRITING.

Too little attention, with some exceptions, has been given to the art of Writing. The multiplicity of other studies

has curtailed this exercise, so that ten or fifteen minutes in a day is all the time that is allotted to it in some of our schools. In Districts No. 6 and 8 it was taught in a systematic manner. Also in District No. 2, careful attention was paid to the art. A plain, legible handwriting in connection with correct spelling is a valuable accomplishment and a good recommendation for any young person. We would encourage children to begin writing and drawing as soon as they can use the slate and pencil. Parents would do well to purchase for their younger children slates with letters, geometrical figures, and pictures upon the margin. By their use they learn to print and draw, and more easily learn to spell. A large part of the writing books examined, showed signs of improvement and were neatly kept.

GRAMMAR.

The method of teaching Grammar is undergoing a change. It is becoming more practical. This is as it should be. The object of Grammar is to enable the pupil to SPEAK and WRITE the language correctly; and as he has much speaking and more or less of writing to do in his lifetime, how important that it be done correctly. The number of scholars who can write a simple sentence, making no mistakes in spelling, syntax or punctuation, is not so large as it ought to be. We would like to see more of the time of our grammar classes devoted to sentence making. Arithmetic cannot be successfully taught without the solving of problems, no more can grammar without the writing of sentences. It is the test of Grammatical knowledge. The writing of compositions should receive more attention than it has done the past year.

GEOGRAPHY.

In no branch have our pupils borne so good an examination as in Geography. There have been but few excep-

tions. In two or three instances have we found teachers requiring their pupils to memorize the full text in Swinton's Larger Geography. This text-book is incumbered with minute details, the memorizing of which requires more time than is profitable. We would suggest that so much as is necessary to be learned should be marked by the teacher, and a general idea obtained by reading the rest.

MAP DRAWING.

We would recommend Map-drawing as one of the best methods of fixing a knowledge of Geography in the mind of the scholar. It has been practiced in two of the districts the past year. In Dist. No. 4 the amount and quality of the drawings were creditable to the pupils. A prize was awarded to Charles A. Sheldon for best drawing of a map of the United States. It is hoped that map-drawing may yet become more common in our schools.

SCHOOL APPARATUS.

Many of our schools are almost destitute of apparatus for illustrating the various branches taught. The expense of such apparatus would be trifling, while the benefit derived from them would be very valuable. Many subjects which are imperfectly understood would be clothed with new interest and greater advancement made. No school-room should be complete without ample black-board, a clock, a thermometer, mathematical solids, a globe, a set of outline-maps, maps of county and state. A new black-board was furnished the school-room in Dist. No. 6 by the citizens.

SINGING.

As an aid to discipline, we recommend Singing as an ex-

ercise in the school-room. When pupils become restless and weary from sitting in a fixed position or there is an oppressive atmosphere, a lively song will help very much to restore order and cheerfulness and a return to study.

REMARKS.

In looking over the schools the past year we have come to the conclusion that parents do not realize the importance of our schools. Teachers may be ever so faithful, the standard of our schools will not rise far above the plane of public sentiment around them. Parents have duties to the school which neither teachers nor committees, however faithful, can discharge for them. Among their duties are :

1st. To secure the constant and punctual attendance of their children.

2nd. To uphold the teacher's authority. For the time being the teacher occupies the place of the parent. This must of necessity be or school government must be given up. Impress upon the child the duty of cheerful submission to wholesome restraints imposed upon them by the teacher, and not encourage him in open opposition to them. If the parent has any good reason to believe that there are any serious faults which should be corrected would it not be wiser kindly to confer with the teacher, or call the attention of the committee to the case.

3rd. Visit the school. Much can be done by parents in this direction—by consultations with the teachers in respect to the studies, the peculiarities of their children. Let teachers feel that parents are in sympathy with them ; that their work is a mutual one. Where a true concord subsists between the school and the home, there is not merely good scholarship but cheerful obedience. An examination of the statistics reveals a want of interest on the part of parents in regard to visiting the schools. In several of the districts the presence of a goodly number of parents and citizens on examination days has cheered us.

Another source of evil to the welfare of our schools is a want of union in the district. The school-room which should be carefully guarded against the approach of discord is too often made the field of strife between opposing cliques and parties. The prudential committee is a friend or an enemy according to his position among the contending parties. Often the teacher shares the same fate,—her usefulness to a great extent is lost.

The habit of taking children from school on the plea of dissatisfaction is a step as unwise as for a farmer to turn his cattle into the street because his hay was not as good as in previous years.

We venture the assertion that there has been no school kept in the town the past year at which any well disposed scholar could not have received much benefit.

The smallness of a large number of our schools is a serious draw-back to their usefulness. They often recite in classes of one or two members, and fail of the enthusiasm that is excited by contact with other minds. Teachers cannot feel that interest they would in a school of larger numbers. It is also more difficult to secure teachers of experience and ability. They are largely taught of necessity by those of but little experience; and if they succeed they seek more remunerative positions, if not, the school suffers the loss.

Great care should be exercised by prudential committees in the selection of teachers. Neither prejudice on the one hand, nor favoritism on the other, should be allowed to influence their choice. Much wisdom and firmness is needed to act only for the best interests of the school.

In the opinion of the committee, the time has come when a higher grade of scholarship is demanded in our teachers. The opportunity of acquiring a thorough preparation is afforded to all who intend to teach, and those only who are well qualified should be accepted.

In the narrow limits of this report we have been obliged to confine ourselves mainly to defects and suggestions of improvement. Did space allow much might be added in praise of various features of our schools, of the earnest, untiring efforts of our teachers and of the good work they have accomplished.

We submit this report with an honest conviction in the sentiments advanced to the highest good of the schools of our town. We have tried to impress old truths ; we claim no originality. To make our schools the means of preparing the rising generation for the greatest usefulness, is worthy the ambition of every citizen.

DANIEL GAGE,

SUPERINTENDING SCHOOL COMMITTEE.

March 1, 1881.

